THE

ART OF MAKING AND USING SKETCHES

PREFACE

THAT this little book is from the hand of a French artist will make it none the less acceptable to English students. Its references are mostly French because its author is so and it is unnecessary as well as undesirable to disturb these in order to adapt them to English readers. The treatise is mainly intended for the use of artists in Black and White. It is short, but it is practical and good and if Englishmen do not know the work of the French artists referred to, it will be a useful experience for them to search it out. The names of English artists might be substituted for the French but the work would not be improved by the mere introduction of the names of Sir John Gilbert Birket Foster, Charles Keene, Sir John Millais and A. B. Houghton—names which, with a host of others will naturally occur to an English student of Black and White.

E. B.

THE ART OF MAKING AND USING SKETCHES.

INTRODUCTION

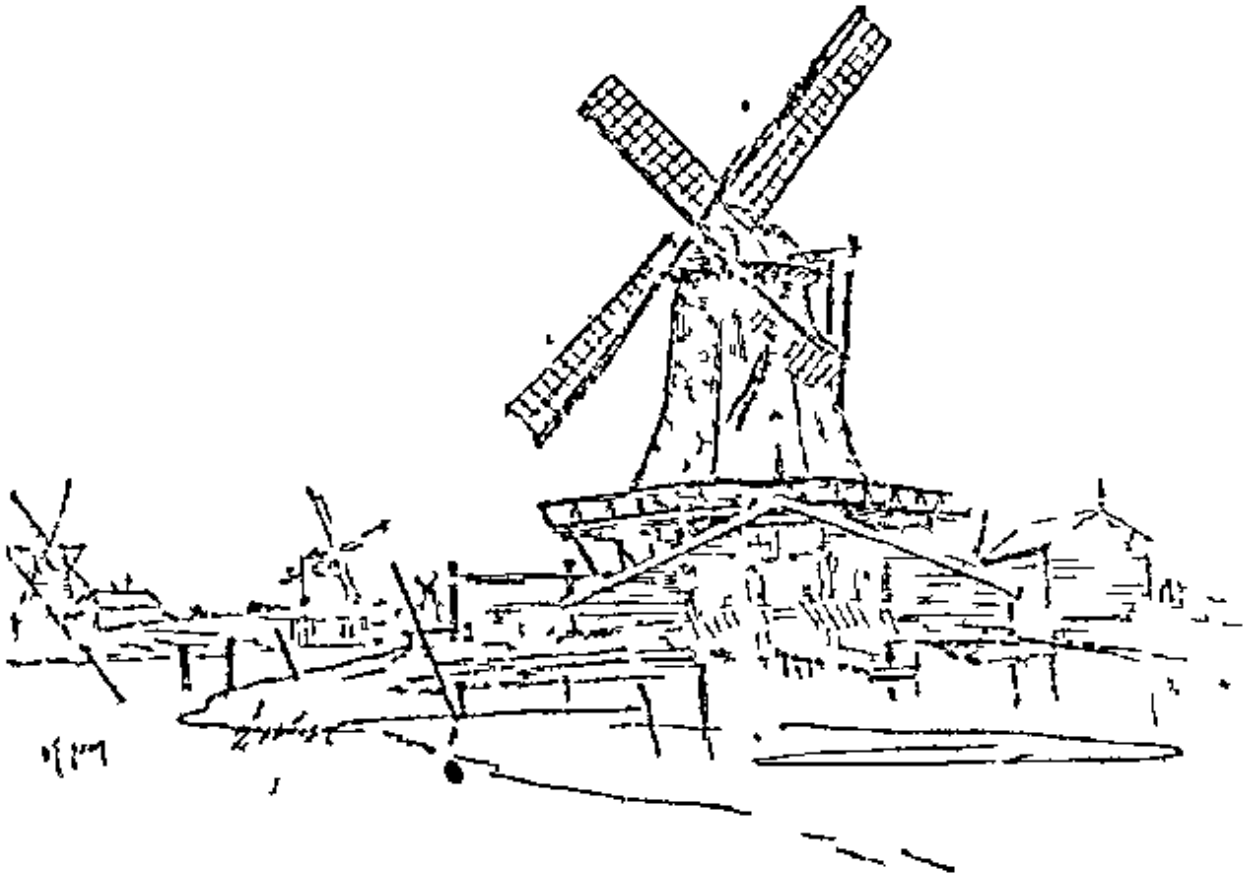
THE art of making a sketch is in fact, the art of recording by a few strokes of the pencil or touches of the pen the remembrance of a thing we have seen, or the impression of a scene we have imagined

A sketch bears the same relation to a finished drawing as shorthand notes bear to a revised report I here speak, of course, of the note sketch rapidly set down, for the word "sketch" is also applied to studies from Nature often a good deal elaborated

I will try to divide into classes the various modes of sketching and more especially to indicate some practical methods of executing and of making use of a sketch, for individual artistic temperament and character have greater influence than might be supposed, both on the treatment and the result Some persons aim chiefly at rapid draughtsmanship others give more time to the matter Some attend chiefly to detail others only look at the mass, and such sketches, though drawn and rendered in different ways, may be equally good, each in its own line In the same way—and this, too, is a matter of natural

temperament—a subject a motive which charms one man will leave another absolutely unmoved

In any case whether the draughtsman be quick or slow, emotional or apathetic there is nothing so interesting or so refreshing as sketching from Nature. The more you sketch the more you will long to sketch, so much so that if once you make a beginning it will become a necessity almost a mania—as innocent a mania as fly fishing and certainly quite as absorbing and far less unpleasant so far as the gudgeon and the bleak are concerned



The Art of Making and Using Sketches.

CHAPTER I

THE APPARATUS

APPARATUS! A ponderous word for a very small collection of necessaries a sketch-book or block, or a small portfolio containing a few sheets of paper, a pencil, a knife to cut it, and a bit of india-rubber—and there you are. If you want to produce finished sketches, if you like to be comfortable and do not mind how much you carry, you may add a camp-stool and an artist's umbrella to stick in the ground Of course, too, you may adapt your implements to

the method you prefer you may take pens and ink, or brushes, water bottle and sepia or Indian ink.

But if you only aim at rapid sketching—mere note-taking—pencil and paper will serve your turn. If you set out intending to record in your book or on your block everything you see which strikes you as typical or interesting as the sportsman purposes to kill and bag every kind of game—and he sometimes misses while the pencil, unlike the gun can always more or less successfully hit the mark—then I say, you must provide yourself with a complete outfit that is to say, a case containing —

A penholder and pens
Pencils charcoal
Brushes.
An ink bottle

And if you propose to work in the shadows —

A small china or enamelled palette
A tube of ivory black or a stick of Indian ink
A water bottle
A tube of sepia.

You may even provide yourself with a small box of water colour paints if you wish to touch in the tints, to refresh your memory, and charming effects are to be got by this method

It is rather difficult to determine precisely the sort of pencils paper etc which are to be preferred In this again the kind of sketch and the experience of the sketcher play an important part Some like a hard pencil and very smooth paper others prefer a soft pencil and paper with a tooth it is a matter of taste. To those who as beginners have not acquired any habit or preference in pencil and paper I may give a few hints which they are free to modify as they please

The best pencils beyond a doubt are Faber's Albert lead Nos BB and HB They cost more than other pencils, it is true but are infinitely superior At the same time Faber's common pencils No 2 answer perfectly for sketching, the lead is hard enough to give all necessary finish and detail and soft enough for putting in shadows.

The paper should not be too rough but on no account glazed Highly-glazed paper will not take the lead which slips on it and does not yield such depth of tone as on a slightly rough paper For pen and ink work on the other hand glazed Bristol board is needed the whiter the better The best I have used is stamped A L No. 659.

Faber's india rubber is good for pencil and even sufficient in some cases to efface ink lines carry as small a piece as possible not to be tempted to rub

out a sketch dingy with much rubbing loses all its freshness and charm

For charcoal drawing use Venetian charcoal and the paper known as Super Ingres.*

Liquid Indian ink has long been procurable in bottles ready for use a great saving of time and trouble in rubbing down a stick of Indian ink in a saucer of water—a very dull business and a long one when the ink is not of the best quality With a bottle of the best Indian ink (Bourgeois is good) in your pocket you have enough to illustrate a volume and fill a sketch book with pen and ink drawings

Pens are of such various kinds and makes that it is hardly possible to name the best, all the more because a whole lifetime would hardly be long enough to try them all If you want to do the very finest work there is no doubt you must use Gillott's 290 For rapid drawing Sapplier's 00 or Brandauer's 515, but in pen and ink work above all else the artist's character and hand must be consulted Your best plan is to try various pens of different make and character and select that which is best suited to your own method and style It is the same with pens for drawing as for writing those which some cannot use suit others to perfection

Brushes are of several sizes and you must try them

* These are to be procured at all artists colour shops.

If they are springy and make a good point when wet, they are good otherwise they are simply useless

The most convenient form of water bottle is enclosed in two tin lids meeting halfway and both removable to serve as cups in which to wash the brushes

The least inconvenient form of camp stool is either the ordinary X shaped seat or a three legged affair with a triangular seat made of leather or webbing

The umbrella should be of linen with a hinge in the stick allowing of its being set at an angle The handle fixes into a supplementary stick with a brass collar at the top and a point at the other end The handle screws in and can be unscrewed for convenience in carrying it.

All this paraphernalia being rather cumbersome especially the camp stool and the umbrella is as I have said practically useful only when your object is to produce rather elaborate sketches requiring some time or indeed for those sybarites who insist on taking their ease even when it is merely to set a few strokes on paper But a note sketch does not demand so much preparation sketch book in one hand and pencil in the other you may lean against a tree or sit if a fallen trunk or a convenient stone happens to be near

CHAPTER II

PRACTICAL HINTS

BEFORE proceeding to enlarge on the various methods of making sketches from Nature out of doors, I will give those who have never tried it a piece of advice: namely, to begin by sketching a good deal from Nature at home This will give them experience and some self-possession—a very necessary thing, for they must be prepared for the curiosity, and sometimes the impertinence, of certain folk who have a mania, as soon as they see an artist quietly at work and thinking of nothing but the matter in hand, of standing close behind him, or even just in front of him, and making no secret of their observations—for the most part anything rather than brilliant

In the country you generally find the whole village at your back fathers, mothers, brats, fowls—it is everybody's business, a perfect invasion They call each other to come on, stand open eyed and open mouthed, and can make neither head nor tail of your dabbling Having no ideas beyond the "practical' aspect of things, they wonder what can be the use of it, and take it into their heads that there is

some plot against their fields, that you are making a plan to cut a road through, or are working at a map of the district. Twenty times have I sat under such comments, and so must everyone who has ever tried

sketching in the country. Then, if you are at all shy, and not blessed with some assurance you pack up and depart, to begin again elsewhere, but the village urchins soon spy you out, and the whole thing is repeated. Again you move, and after a few such attempts you go home quite crestfallen.

Thus, you see, self-confidence is absolutely

needful when you have settled yourself nothing must daunt you. *Je suis je reste.* Send those who stand in front of you civilly to the right about make play with your elbows on those who get too close to them and forget those who are behind you Abstract yourself or only laugh at their idiotic remarks

An artist of my acquaintance hit on a plan for getting rid of inconvenient brats Prussian blue was his means of defence. He suddenly applied a brush well filled with this strong colour to the face of a prying boy who in trying to wipe it off smeared himself all over The notion is droll enough but I cannot altogether recommend it more especially because the mere sketcher is not always provided with this dreadful blue the application of the recipe must be left to the painter

At the same time I do not mean to say that none but idiots ever stop to look at an artist's work By no means There are people who take an interest in any and every work of art however unpretending and who cannot resist the pleasure it is to them to see anyone drawing or painting but they have tact enough to say nothing and know where to stand so as not to be in the way But neither by these considerate spectators nor by more troublesome intruders must you ever be put to rout go on the even tenor of your way as calmly as if you were alone

in a desert Otherwise you will be irresolute you will not feel free to treat the subject as you would wish and the result will betray it For this reason I advise you to begin by practising at home and acquiring the habit of sketching from Nature this is quite easy—you have a hundred subjects to your hand faces figures flowers views from the windows what not You will thus gain sufficient facility of hand in some degree to overcome your shyness when working out of doors — a shyness which commonly arises from the fear of failure and dread of seeming ridiculous Not that anyone is ridiculous who works *sincerely*, only do your best.

The first few times when you draw out of doors you will inevitably suffer from the presence of lookers on but you will become used to it and by degrees quite accustomed to drawing with a crowd round you I know artists who have no hesitation in sitting down to work in a public street or market place, and they are right for after all they suffer more discomfort than they cause, and, besides there is no royal road to achievement

CHAPTER III

HOW TO MAKE A SKETCH

A GOOD sketch must be done boldly; the lines must be crisply and unhesitatingly drawn the masses decisively *indicated* the *forms* clearly defined Nothing is more annoying than an irresolute sketch meant to be pretty but in fact only soft and woolly A sketch must be simply and firmly drawn in the case of a very rapid sketch of course a mere outline must suffice but it must be cleanly and decisively pencilled in

Each one has his own fancy as to how and where he can sketch, as I said before one can sketch standing another must be comfortably placed Each as far as may be will humour his own habits and aptitude subject of course to the circumstances in which he may find himself But it is most desirable that you should accustom yourself to sketch as simply as possible with the smallest amount of accommodation and apparatus If you begin by indulging yourself and taking your ease it will be more difficult afterwards to work in straitened circumstances Understand from the first that when you

are required to sketch every variety of object you by no means always meet with every comfort and convenience—very far from it I am speaking, of course, of those who mean business either as professional draughtsmen, or at least, as earnest students of sketching from Nature If you do it only for pleasure, then indeed have as complete an outfit as you will, and make yourself as comfortable as possible a good stool, an elegant umbrella, a variety of papers pencils, etc, a luncheon basket, and a servant to carry it all

An artist working for illustrations has to go about a great deal When he has only to draw more or less interesting scenery, under a more or less sunlit sky, it is plain sailing, but if he has to show an incident of actual life, and to push in among a crowd, or even a struggling mob, before he can take all the notes he needs to complete his drawing it is quite another matter, and sometimes far from pleasant Supposing you are employed to make a sketch on the spot of some recent disaster, and are sent off at the very moment when everything is topsy turvy, come what may, you must draw in the midst of the general confusion, not to mention that your own position may be barely safe I found myself on the morning after the fire at the Opéra Comique perched between two firemen on the top of the wall along the Rue Marivaux,

on the one side the yawning void on the other the *smouldering and smoking ruins of the* destroyed theatre of which I had to take a sketch The position was not particularly pleasant or comfortable I can assure you And in war time do you suppose the draughtsmen who follow the campaign can take their ease as they work?

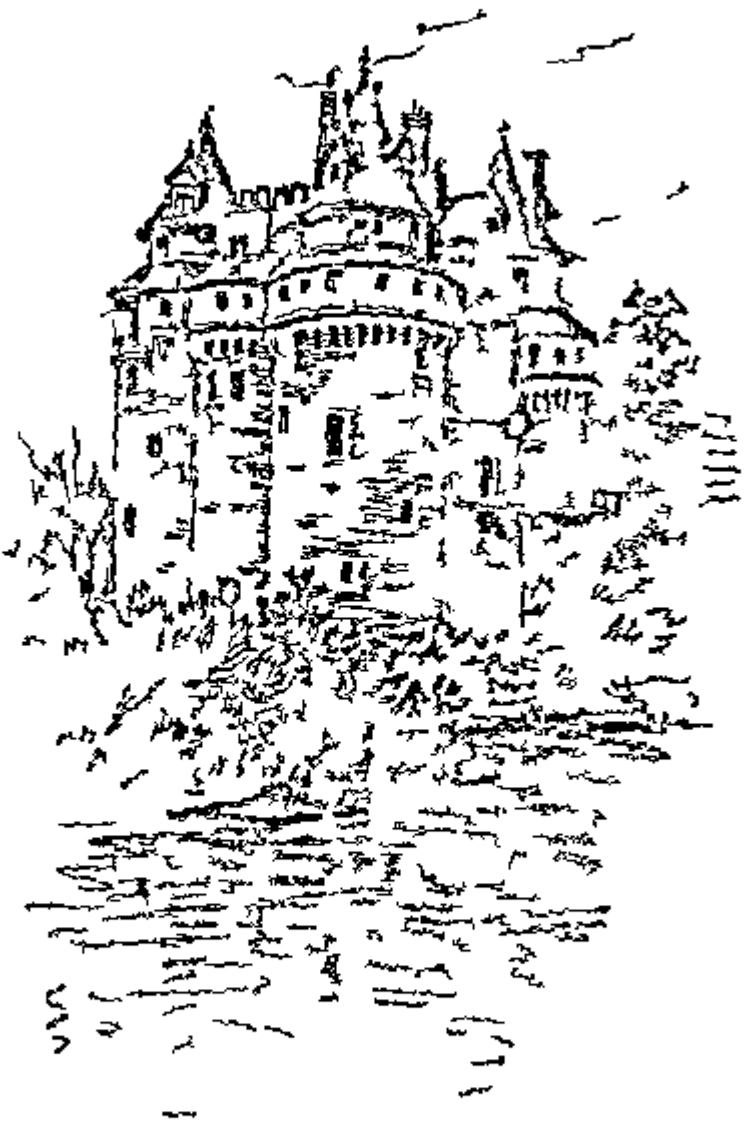
I will try to explain as clearly as possible the *best way of making sketches each after its kind*

When a rather finished drawing is required either of figures placed on purpose or seen in a group you should begin by clearly noting the general arrangement with a few lines and then pencil in just so much detail as is necessary to record what you see without overcharging This is a matter of personal appreciation but let it be clearly understood that the simplest expression is the best but also the most difficult, it would be almost safe to say the less facts are stated the better the sketch The skill of the rapid draughtsman lies in knowing how to *skip* all that is unnecessary and in concentrating effect and interest on the point he wishes to emphasise

In the same way if the aim of the sketch is to reproduce an effect this effect whether of light or darkness must be insisted on at the expense of all else

As to the actual process it cannot be reduced to

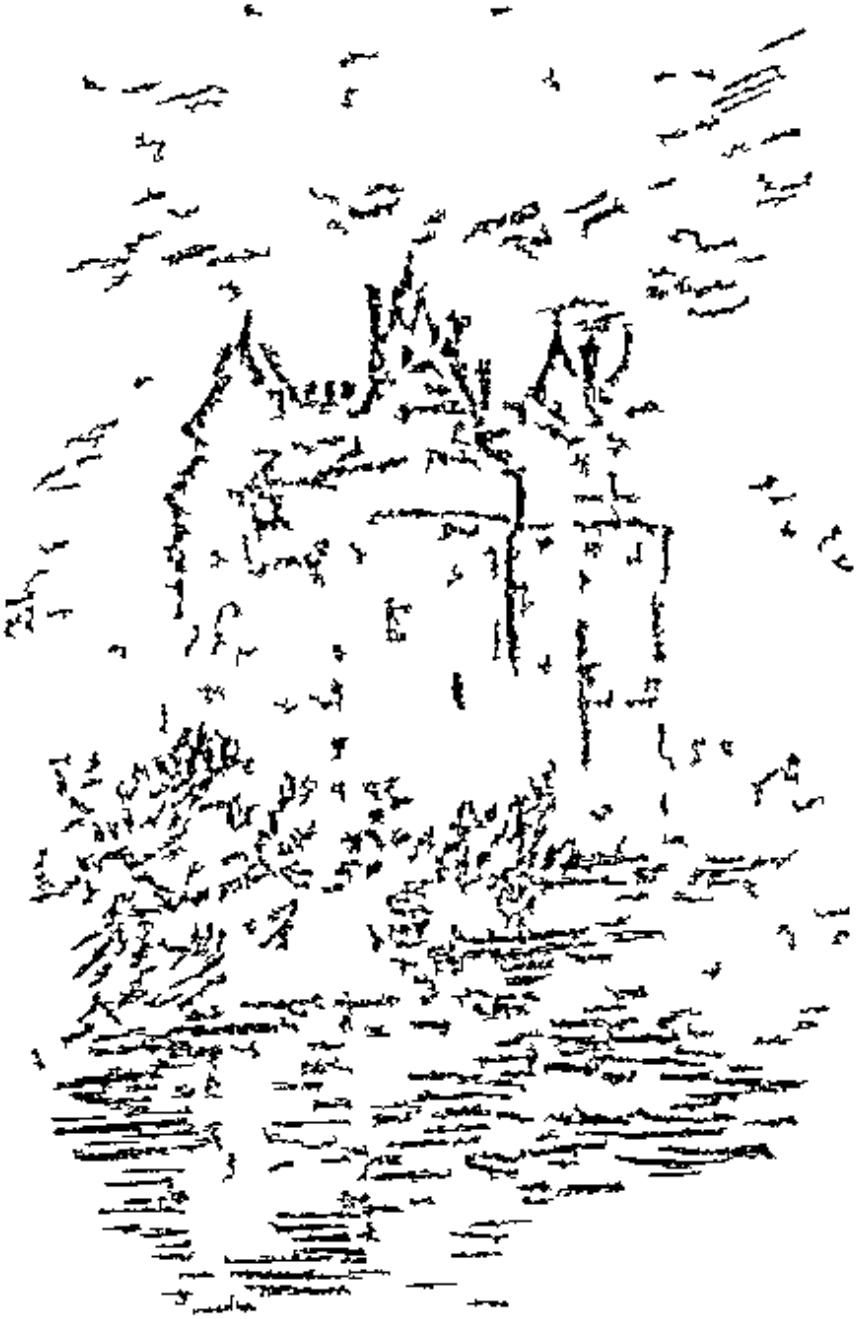
words Take ten draughtsmen set them down before the same subject they will work by ten different methods and—if they are equally skilful—will all



A SKETCH STUDIED FOR THE DETAIL.

arrive at the same result. Each will have infused into it his own individuality no doubt but they will be equally accurate though they will have seen the subject and worked up their effects by dissimilar methods

The simplest plan—this is for the beginner's benefit—seems to me to set out the most conspicuous



A SKETCH STUDIED FOR EFFECT

outline round which the others will fall into place if you are careful to preserve their relative proportions and direction. With a little practice you will be able

to fit the parts together as you would fit the pieces of a puzzle

If you cannot trust your eye to determine the distances and proportions of the lines you can practise a simple method familiar to all who have any

experience in drawing from the round Stretch out your arm holding your pencil upright aslant or horizontally as may be needed and mark off the measurement from the end of the pencil by placing your thumb on the spot, then you can compare that line or space with any other you require to draw Supposing for instance that you cannot rely on your eye to estimate the difference between the height and breadth of a building with your pencil for a guide first measure the height *holding it upright* then without moving your thumb turn it into a horizontal position, and you will see the difference between the two For greater certainty shut one eye, so as to see your improvised standard quite clearly

In drawing from Nature you must estimate the relation of the lines to each other in your head Supposing your subject to consist of a piece of wall a shrub a tree a cottage and a distance beyond You begin by putting in the wall larger or smaller according to the size and elaboration you intend to give to the drawing then you will estimate the relative height of the bush against the wall—let us say it is two thirds—and you put that in Then suppose that the tree is twice as tall as the shrub that the cottage is lower than the shrub by a quarter and that the distance nowhere rises even at its highest point, more than half way up the cottage roof You

have all the proportions of height and you must carry out the same process as to those of breadth

Each artist in setting to work has his own way of forming such an estimate the way here given is only one among others But there are many which will come to you quite naturally there is no necessity to calculate by thirds quarters or halves, the real difficulty is to set out the first or standard object When once that is in the right place, it serves as a standard of comparison for the dimensions of the rest which it will be easy to find by taking as a basis the lines and points set out for the first object For instance you have sketched in a house you must look at the proportion of the next object does it reach the roof or such a window or is it no higher than the door? Some point will be found just below some other point or line In the illustration you will observe that the bank on the left hand comes just below the trunk of the tree that on the right answers to the middle of the bush and so forth

Whether for height or breadth the process is the same and for oblique lines too By determining the point where the lower end of the oblique line lies and the relative distance of the highest point you have the angle of the slope

I have tried to make this as clear as possible but a written description may, perhaps seem a little

confused However, as carrying it out in practice is a matter of common sense I do not fear being misunderstood

Your first attempts at sketching will be doubtful you will fail in finding the leading point and often discover that you have begun with some particular which turns out to be less important or interesting than another part of the subject rather more to the left or right a little lower or a good deal higher up but by degrees you will gain experience and quickly find the point which gives the best result. In the same way a beginner will often overlook many noteworthy *facts and dwell on commonplace or uninteresting things* You must learn to *see* to regard the scene you have before you solely from the point of view of a sketch After a little while you will be quite surprised to find things come of themselves when treated in the right way with certain effects of light and shade

A rather serious difficulty sometimes is to *cut out your picture* and make a good page of the subject By *cutting out the picture* I mean determining where to begin on the left hand how far to go on the right, whether to show a good deal of sky and but little landscape or the reverse. This frequently depends on the spot where you wish to concentrate your effect —if effect is what you aim at—or on the relation and

arrangement of the subject In this besides experience taste is needed and you must try to educate your taste This cutting and setting out of the picture are matters of the first importance

POOL (STILL WATER)

As to the handling of the sketch it is a thing impossible to describe in print Every artist has his own knack of using his pen or pencil, charcoal or brush it is like writing a matter of hand, he must try to express what he sees by cross lines and hatch

ing if he uses a pen by more or less vigorous *scribbling* if he works in pencil or charcoal

In working from Nature you must try to render in

STREAM (RUNNING WATER)

all sincerity what lies before you and aim at two things only drawing and effect Execution is of secondary importance if the effect is true and the drawing

satisfactory, the character of your lines and shading matters little Still I would warn you not to take this too literally, it is obviously desirable that the mode of execution should make the sketch as *legible* as possible, the execution must be such as to give full value to the character of the objects depicted but, besides this, you must endeavour to achieve a style which is both bright and individual However, it is only by dint of practice that you will lose all self consciousness of the how and why you draw your lines, and hatch or rub in your shadows When you have had long experience of drawing from Nature, the handling of a pen or pencil becomes almost mechanical you cease to consider whether a line should be drawn upwards or downwards, the pen or pencil does it without any reflection Your thought is of the result, not as regards the workmanship, but as regards its truth and effect

And Nature is before you as a guide, by her help you will find means of interpreting her, making it, however, a general rule to adapt your strokes as far as possible to the modelling of the objects you are drawing

If you want to represent still water, even without having been told so, you do it with horizontal lines, if the water is in motion, the lines, though still horizontal, will be broken and irregular The reflec-

tions, which in still water will be indicated by vertical lines, in running water are shown by horizontal lines, with darker or closer shading, to give depth of tone.

The trunk of a tree admits of various treatment,

BIRCH.

according to its species, always, of course, taking the characteristic of the bark as your guide, the trunk of an oak is rough and broken, that of a birch requires curved lines across the thickness of the tree Nature sufficiently indicates this treatment. In the same way, in representing the foliage, set it out

carefully in masses and give distinct relief to the parts in high light by putting in the shadows firmly

In short, handling strictly speaking the executive practice of sketching has no rules, a hundred

OAK

different artists will have a hundred different ways of doing their work As I have said it is a matter of hand partly of skill and very much of habit and experience But one word of warning beware of rectangular cross hatching it is very ugly and too

like the cross bars of a crate, vary the execution as much as possible, both as to the direction and the strength of the lines Aim at contrast in feeling as well as in effect, thus you will avoid monotony Practise till you are master of your instrument, whether pen or pencil, etc, till it has free play in your fingers, and so gives a variety of "touch," which often enhances the value of a sketch

In some cases you must not be satisfied with an exact reproduction it is not always sufficient, you must *interpret* the scene Excessive exactitude in reproduction is what we get by photography, and what is it worth? Interpretation is the work of the artist One is uninteresting, the other full of charm

7. Sketches done entirely from Nature, and needing only a few corrections or a little *faking* at home

8 Outline sketches Sketches without a model

I

Rapid note-sketching, enough to be a reminder of a spot or of an effect, to be used in the composition of a drawing or to finish it from, and to preserve a record of some striking object.

Sometimes the merest trifle, a tree, a shrub, a thatched roof with a bright light on it or seen dark against the sky, will, with the help of imagination, suggest a complete picture You may have gone past the place ten or twenty times past a scene which has never moved you in the least where you discerned nothing to afford the materials of a picture and then, one fine day under some new effect of light this same subject will strike you quite differently, standing out brightly against stormy clouds or dark against a clear sky Or a scene which under the morning light is quite unattractive may look grand at sunset or weird in the moonlight.

When a subject or an effect thus seizes and grasps you, never fail to fix your remembrance of it if only by a few strokes A sketch, however devoid of interest it may seem however slight it may be should always be preserved for it will certainly be of use

sooner or later When imagination flags look through your notes and sketches you will rarely fail to find an idea lurking there The veriest trifle will give birth to a notion for a picture a scrap of foreground will remind you of a distance or a rocky bit of distance will suggest a foreground And very often you will find that one is the complement of the other

Indeed when once the habit of sketching is formed if by chance you have nothing about you to draw with, you will feel as bereft as the smoker left with nothing to smoke You will be as much annoyed at missing a striking object for want of a pencil, as a smoker who has rolled his cigarette and has no match to light it A word of advice, then Always have a pencil in your pocket For lack of paper, you can, at a pinch scribble on your shirt cuff An artist of my acquaintance never came in from a walk without having covered his left shirt cuff with notes and sketches, which he copied into his note books The washerwoman was not perhaps best pleased, but he was perfectly content.

For making a sketch of this kind you must, of course restrict yourself to indicating as exactly as possible the most striking fact You must execute it differently, according to whether it is the outline or the effect you wish to record If the outline, draw it

each and make a final sketch for the finished picture. Yes but what looks very well in one is not in harmony with the others Well you must get out of the difficulty somehow Sacrifice some of your ideas it is a mistake to put in too much Lay them by for another opportunity and then do your final design from Nature but preserving the composition and arrangement of your rough sketch You will meet with some difficulties for in the sketch out of your own head you may find that some figure or detail comes quite different when drawn from Nature, however by taking pains you can pull things together and it is better to trust to Nature than to yourself However clever you may be Nature is your superior, however great your talent she is greater, and if you only obey her you are sure not to be beside the mark Great artists are truthful and it is Nature who has taught them truth

II

More elaborate sketches of the whole or part of a subject taken for its own sake, or as a *store sketch* either because some effect has taken your fancy and you wish to preserve it or because a scene has attracted you by its beauty or picturesqueness

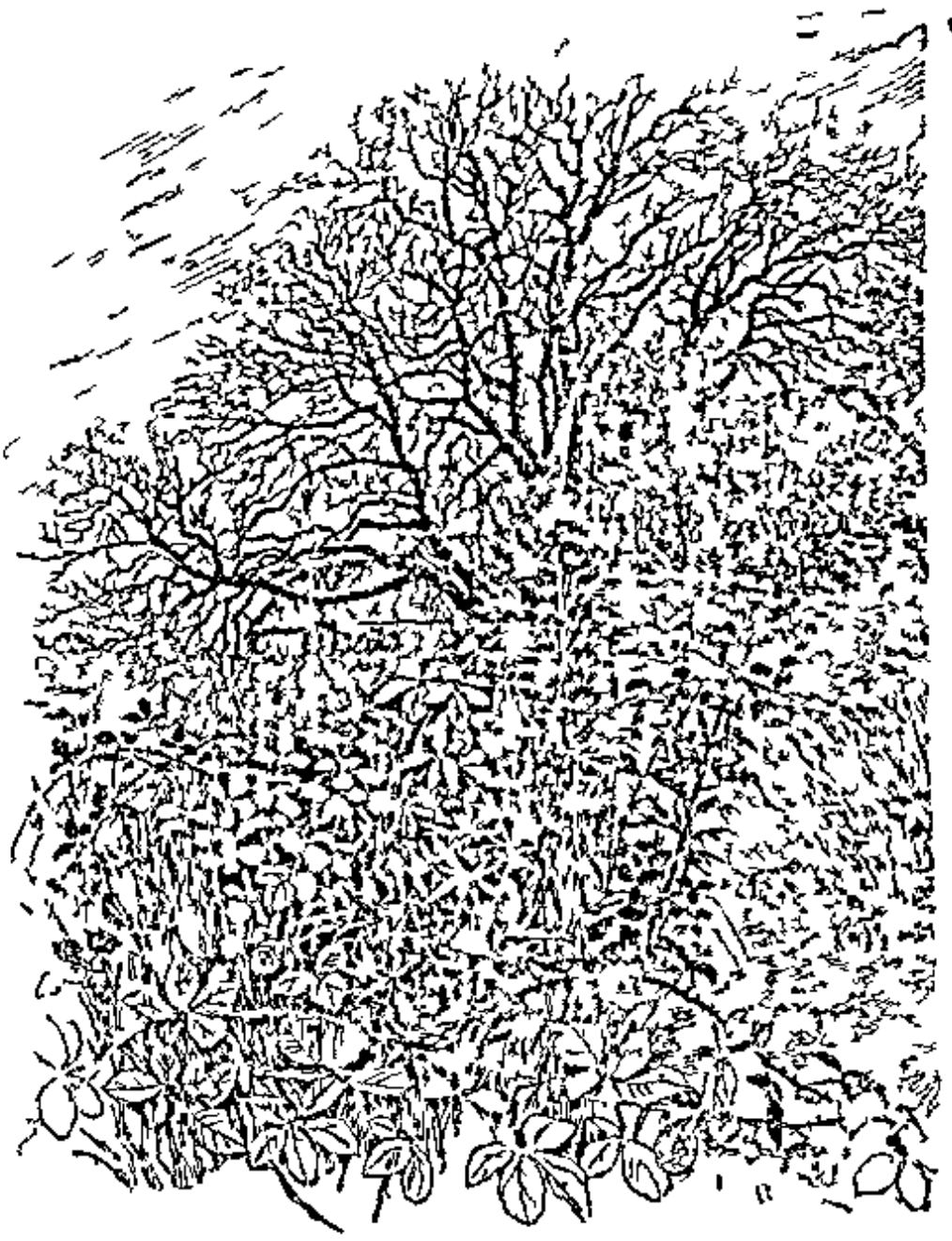
When taste or fancy have prompted you to record some effect or subject you should work it up as much as possible both in drawing and in tone but without

niggling—to use a vulgarism which expresses my meaning In this case the complete outfit may have its use Open out your camp stool, make yourself comfortable under the shelter of your umbrella lay out all your paraphernalia

A good sketch of this finished kind has a charm which is rarely to be found in the drawing done from it, there is generally something lost You try to make it fuller more complete and you only make it heavier There is something fascinating in a sketch which is often lacking in the more finished *replica* The reason is that *in drawing from Nature—I speak* of a sincere artist for there are some who contrive to *fake* even when working from Nature—we strive to represent all we see and to express what we feel we are under the spell Then when we make a finished drawing we often fancy that by a touch of white here or of black there we are improving the picture For the most part we are spoiling it The sketch is to the drawing what the under painting is to an oil picture in one there is the first dash of feeling in the other painstaking labour one is quivering with vitality, the other sober and cold, the sketch is thrown off under the force of inspiration the drawing is hampered by rules, the first is the direct result of sensation and emotion the second is done in cold blood

You must not, however attach an exaggerated

importance to what I have just said. A very capital drawing may be made from a good sketch, my a



finished work may be an improvement on a second rate sketch, it all depends on the artist's skill, taste, and experience.

There is the sketch done for personal enjoyment for the sake of a tempting subject or effect; this you will treat lovingly, and make it as perfect as possible. Then there is the sketch done from the utilitarian point of view either for the purpose of introducing it wholly or in part into a composition, or because it is a subject you require—a certain landscape building, or what not. This may be rougher still it must give all the information and details which will be needed in the execution of the drawing.

III

Sketches of figures or animals, with more or less detail, according to the circumstances under which you draw them.

The last section applies more especially to picturesque subjects and landscapes. If you have to sketch figures or animals, the character of the individual is what you must try to seize and often at a glance.

With regard to human figures or animals as with everything else, what generally make them tempting to sketch are the accessory circumstances in which they are presented. A sudden movement, an unexpected attitude and out with your pencil to draw what would, perhaps have passed unnoticed but for that action or gesture which must be caught as it

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flies unless the people or the beasts are so good natured as to remain at least for a few minutes in the position which you desire to perpetuate then of course you may take more pains and more or less *time according to the patience of the model* Excepting in the case of a figure going away from you walking or running the attitude which charmed you in the first instance is almost sure to be repeated at longer or shorter intervals in a workman—for instance a labourer—the action you want to draw is certain to recur A figure in repose or occupied in some tranquil employment—reading fishing talking—will be sure to repeat the same gestures again and again You must just have patience and await the repetition of the action or attitude to enable you to finish or verify the sketch Meanwhile employ your pencil on those portions which remain longer in one position or of which the movement is so regular that you can go on drawing without interruption excepting to work at the moving limb the instant it has returned to the position you need But of course you must work fast and try to impress the exact action on your memory

and cattle at pasture will repeat the same movements precisely as long as this interesting occupation lasts

Greater difficulty will be found in drawing even synthetically, figures or animals in rapid motion a

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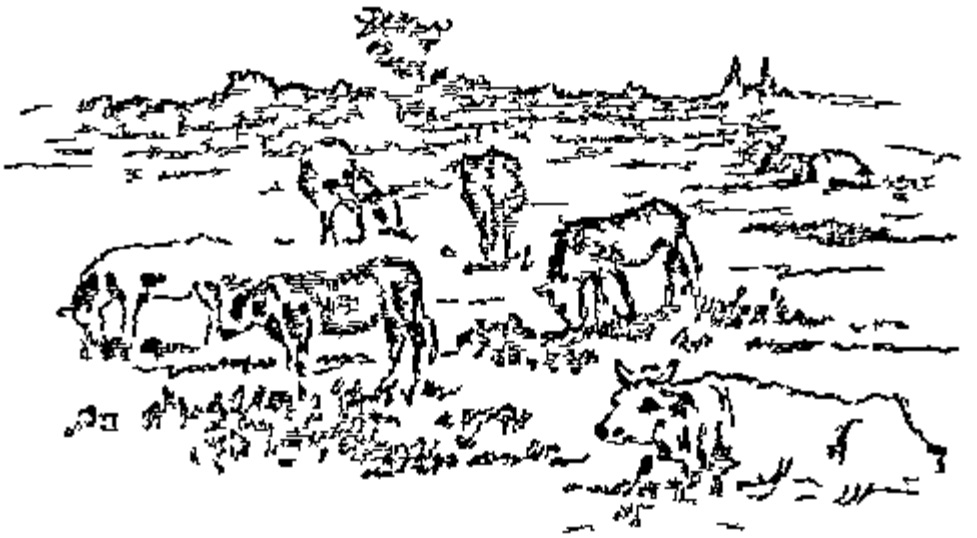
A woodman wielding his axe will remain in the same attitude as to his legs at any rate for some little time while the upper part of his body is constant movement An animal drinking or [illegible]

horse at full gallop for instance of which you try to get an impression This is to a great extent a

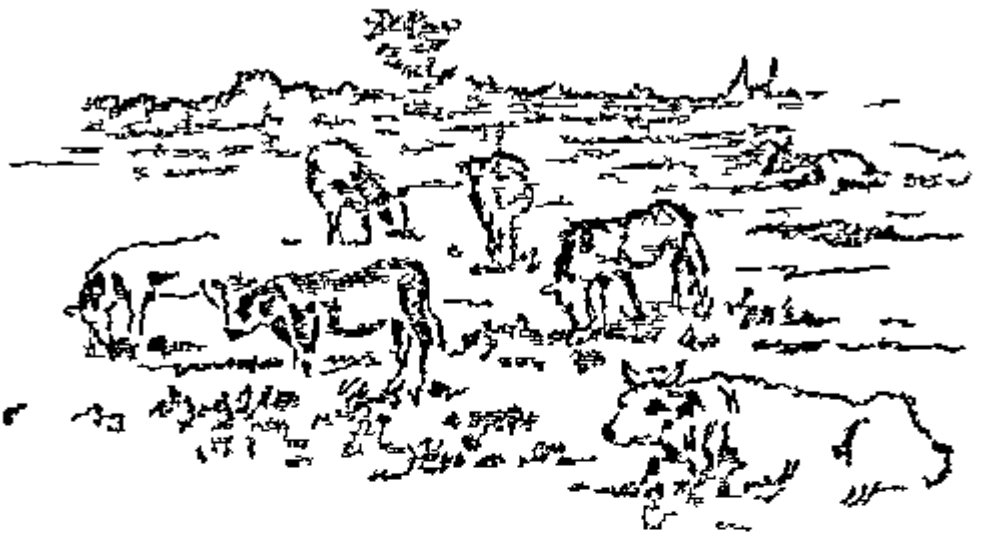


matter of careful observation you must as it were dissect the movements and distinguish the action of

motion are not the only parts which change their position the whole attitude of the body, head, etc, is changed in consonance with the action of the legs You can make no accurate drawing of this you have not time, indeed, all you can achieve is to note

certain impressions as exactly as possible, and stamp the action you can discern on your memory, if subsequently you require a more accurate study of the subject, you must get what help you can from a horse at rest, which will enable you to understand the details of structure which it is impossible to discern in a beast going at full speed

horse at full gallop for instance of which you try to get an impression This is to a great extent a



matter of careful observation you must as it were dissect the movements and distinguish the action of

one part of the body in its relation to the rest For it must be clearly understood that the limbs in

motion are not the only parts which change their position the whole attitude of the body, head, etc, is changed in consonance with the action of the legs You can make no accurate drawing of this you have not time, indeed, all you can achieve is to note

certain impressions as exactly as possible and stamp the action you can discern on your memory if subsequently you require a more accurate study of the subject, you must get what help you can from a horse at rest, which will enable you to understand the details of structure which it is impossible to discern in a beast going at full speed

seize even when you have long studied the characteristics of animals

If it is a face which has attracted you by its oddity or beauty its sad or merry expression, what you must try to record rather than a likeness is the character of the features and the expression A face may be a good likeness and yet have none of the character of the original and you may also hit off the character and expression in spite of a very poor resemblance This may seem paradoxical but it is a fact and in my opinion the former result is often the better of the two

If the man—whether gay or gloomy handsome or ugly—whose face you think worthy of your pencil will sit for you draw him take your time for your drawing without wasting too much of his if not you must catch his features and fix them on paper as rapidly as possible noting their characteristics in as few strokes as may be But do not delude yourself with the notion that this is anything less than extremely difficult requiring much practice Some people often almost without any knowledge of drawing have the gift of hitting off characteristic types, everyone has seen scrawls done by mere children almost without form and void and yet giving a perfect idea of what the infant artist meant to represent This is what you must aim at, only minus the ignorance.

illustration In fact, he founded a school, a vast number of talented draughtsmen were his disciples—not copying him, however, but preserving all their individuality

When you have feasted on Morin's sketches, turn to those of Vierge, another great artist, and, in the same sense, a colourist, his sketches have an indescribable briskness and vital truth, they are of rare elegance, and yet so simple in treatment—a line, a spot, and the trick is done Yes, the trick is done, and you might almost believe that you could do as much Only try And after looking at his sketches, study Vierge's drawings and illustrations take my word for it, you will never think the time wasted that you spend upon them

Marvellous sketches, again, faultlessly drawn, absolutely true, are those of the painter, Edouard Detaille I am speaking of worked-up detailed sketches, there you have them, and so full of life!

Types of character! Look at Renouard's work Without having seen the people whose faces he has recorded in a few touches, you feel the likeness Here are studies of character of the purest stamp For drawings of animals, look at those by Lançon

I mention these artists, for their names come naturally to the pen they are past masters of their art, but there are many more whose sketches are

tain portions which to the artist's eye are more pleasing than others and to place these in a high

light to the detriment of their neighbours which must be left in the shade

The principle is the same and all that has been said of drawing animals or any other object holds good with regard to these Even in a study of

fruition to their enthusiasm The ancients drew inspiration from her we do the same, and to all ages she will remain new and ever new Gather at hap-

foreground certain blades of grass certain bushes a bramble a clump of flowers—some portions in short must be sacrificed for the benefit of others but the hole will gain by it

No work is more delightful than a closely accurate study of foreground bits and nothing can be easier to meet with especially in the way of brambles flowers and the like In Nature everything composes and the humblest plant is a joy to study Nothing again lends itself so kindly to decorative uses for plants are above all things decorative my the basis and first principle of all decoration What else indeed inspired all our architectural ornament? The Corinthian capital is founded on the acanthus one of the most beautifully cut leaves in the whole plant world Look at the carvings of the Renaissance Next to figures and animal flowers and fruit are the chief element of the ornament of that period And the styles known as Louis XIV Louis XV and Louis XVI—every style in short is based on the growth of flowers and leaves

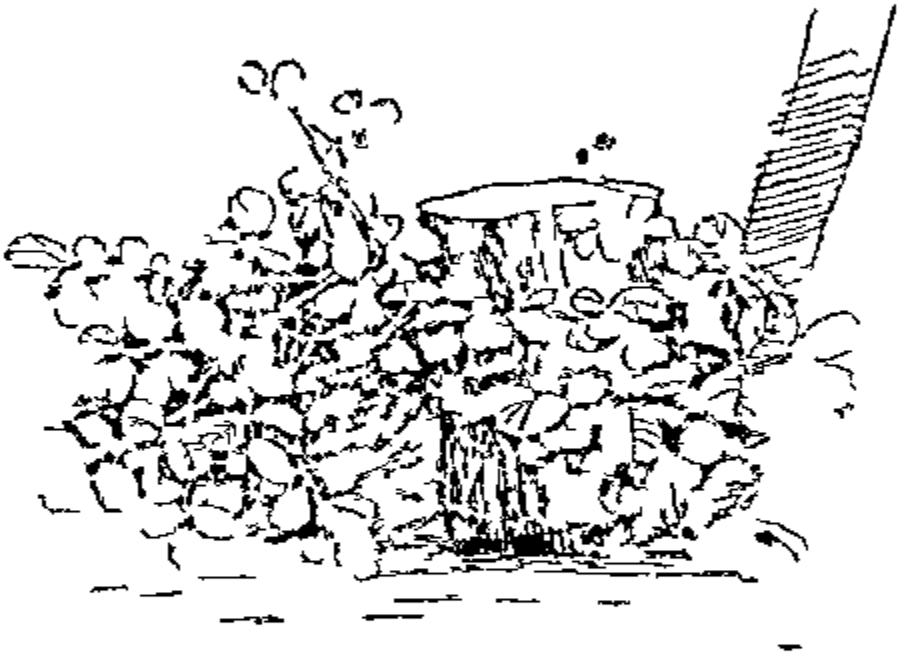
And numerous as are the subjects which the vegetable world has yielded and will yet yield to the painter or sculptor the mine will never be worked out for Nature is so lavish to artists as to renew perpetually the documents she so freely bestows on them and so generous as to be ever ready to lend

fruition to their enthusiasm The ancients drew in spiration from her we do the same, and to all ages she will remain new and ever new Gather at hap

hazard any twig from any shrub Draw it just as you see it without any alteration and you will find it I might say without exception a delightful object In the country wherever your road leads you over whatever ground you will come upon ten twenty

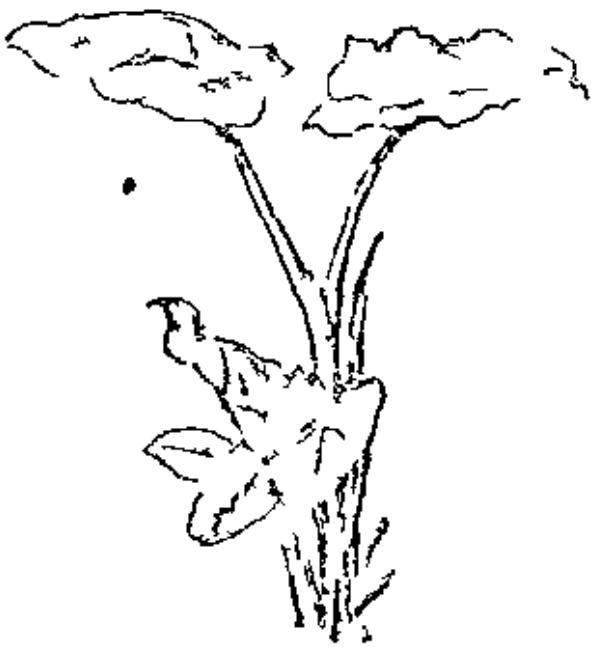
hundred subjects to sketch for foreground the least blade of grass the humblest trail of foliage is a joy to draw

It is to be noted that the wilder the plant the prettier it is—with due respect to horticulturists to whom indeed this book is not dedicated—the



prettier to draw I mean for I would not go to such a length as to advise the reader to plant his garden if he has one with thistles nettles or brambles But look at the bramble—I ask you do you know a more elegant plant? can you conceive of anything more exquisite or graceful than those branches as they tangle and twine and hang in wreaths and mazes? And how beautiful the leaf is and the flower, and the fruit and the way they grow together!

And get other 'weeds' as we call them. Study a thistle with its leaves so curiously curved and cocked, so whimsically notched, study the poppy, the corn flower, the daisy and a hundred more to tell the names of which botanical knowledge fails me. Draw your plant from the front, from the side, from above



or from below; it will be equally delightful and unfailingly supply you with a decorative bit, ready made to your need.

If you fill your sketch book with such scraps as these, and if you only know how to utilise the record thus compiled you will have an inexhaustible mine of endless decorative subjects. Not only can you use your sketches to reproduce the plants as Nature made them, but you can treat them as the basis of

application, and so add significance to a picture, even when they do not constitute the subject.

'The martyr always bears a palm the hero wears a laurel crown' Thus the oak is figurative of strength, orange-blossom of innocence If you are modest you may wear the violet, but if you are a coxcomb you must put up with the narcissus

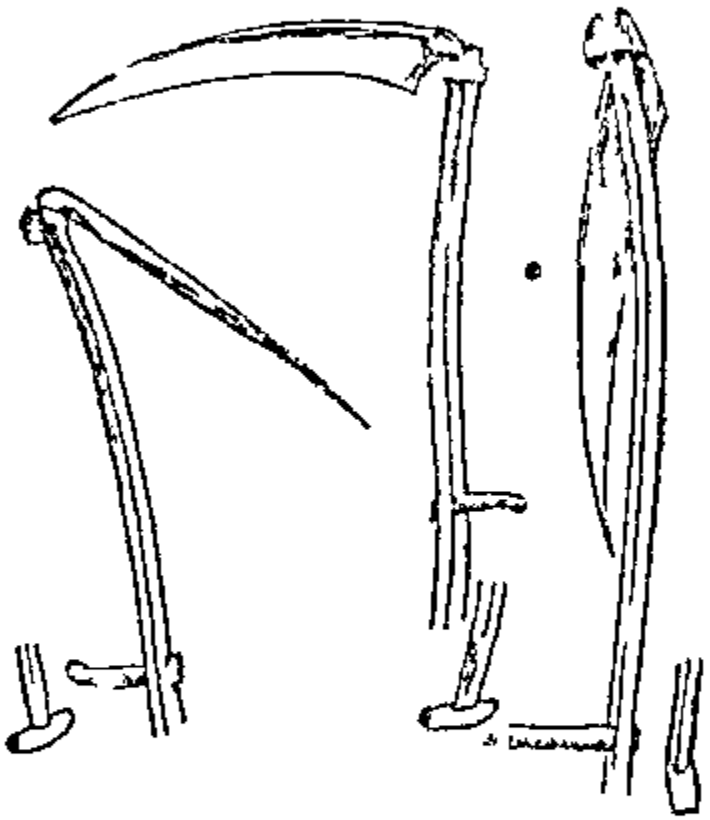
Then, again, there are flowers which are national badges. Britain displays the rose and the thistle, Spain the pink, and flowers have sometimes a political significance—the lily of royalist France, the everlasting flower, and many more Never neglect the opportunity, when you are so happy as to be in the country, of sketching as much as possible every plant you see, however unpretending, and when you have filled ten sketch books, go on and fill ten more. You will never have too many, and the supply is endless, you need not fear that you will exhaust it.

which is a condition of general treatment depending on the play of light and shade diffused over the whole composition of which the object may ultimately form a feature. Correctness is the first point to be aimed at, exactitude and as in everything else the character of the object represented

When I insist so strongly here as in former chapters on this point of *character* it is because it is of the greatest importance

A sketch taken as I have suggested to be used in a composition already begun is of course done to order so to speak since its purpose is already settled Supposing for instance that you have to represent a mediæval incident you must find chairs and other furniture of the period you will have either to avail yourself of photographs done from ancient specimens of furniture or of books containing such information as you need Both, of course may be useful or even necessary but they will never be so valuable by a long way as a good sketch taken by yourself and this for several reasons in the first place the object you yourself have seen always dwells more precisely in the mind than any reproduction of it in the second place it is a hundred to one that when you want the object as seen from one side you will find only front views or three quarters front It is in every respect better to rely on the evidence of your

own eye and hand than on that of others, often used already and not invariably truthful Again you will be better able to judge of the proportions of the object with regard to the human figure if you have seen the thing itself, and this in Paris is quite easy

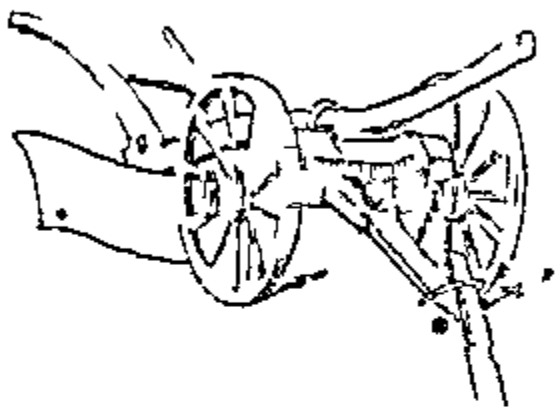


since the museums of the Louvre Cluny, Carnavalet etc are open to all artists and in London that of South Kensington which is rich in such specimens of decorative craftsmanship

scythe which are not commonly to be found in a studio You must go and sketch the said implements This would give you a plausible excuse for spending a few hours in the country, but if you are an inveterate townsman and live in Paris you can there find all you require At the Conservatoire des Arts et Metiers (a permanent exhibition of arts and crafts) every variety of utensil, tool and boat is to be seen of every kind and of every period (In London the annual agricultural shows will supply you with a store of valuable notes) The Paris Academy of Music has a fine collection of musical instruments and the Cluny Museum is a mine of interest in furniture and curiosities In short, the artist who lives in Paris has everything under his hand and can draw everything from Nature

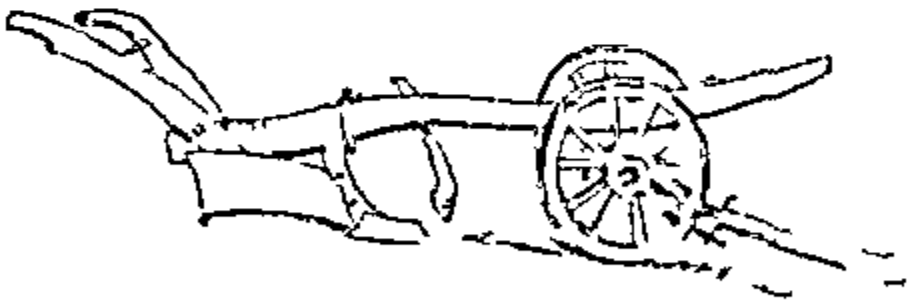
This is the main point but it is wise to glean wherever you may be and as soon as your eyes fall on an object which has any typical character or special function it is well to take note of it and to draw it under every aspect, or at least in several positions. It would be foolish to limit your efforts to sketching the object in no attitude but that in which it first offered itself to your eye for some things have so peculiar a form and are sometimes so distorted, that it would be difficult, if not impossible to draw them from fancy in any other position than

that in which you saw and sketched them Test this with an open umbrella for instance or a tall hat things common enough and which you see a hundred times a day but which are nevertheless very difficult



to represent in every conceivable position without having them to draw from

Not as may be easily supposed that I refer to



umbrellas or tall hats when I recommend store sketches of various objects everyone has at least one or the other and if needful can draw them from Nature at the moment I refer to such things as no one habitually has about him the plough for

instance—of which I spoke above—the scythe all the instruments of field labour what not?* In short everything is worth sketching—slightly of course but correctly, you can never have too many of such authorities and you will often be very glad to discover in your sketch book a hint which may save you the trouble of going in search of the objects you

require—a serious matter when you are pressed for time

Besides such things as you can study deliberately—inanimate objects allowing you to take your time over drawing their presentment—there are others not less useful to have in stock but more difficult to draw because they are in motion vehicles tipping and the like. Of these you must take shorthand notes, and add the details afterward from similar objects at rest. With a few strokes you can record

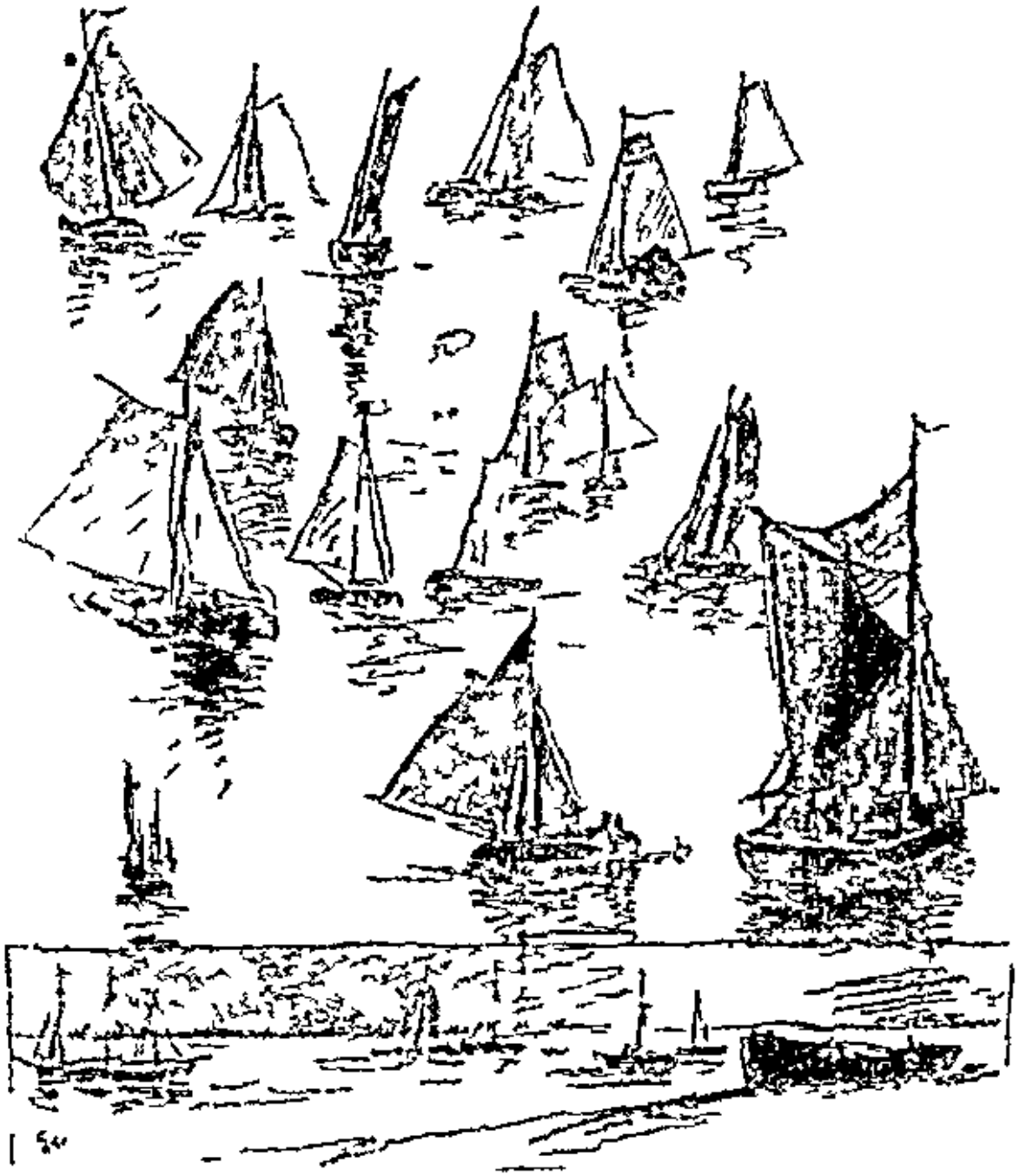
their attitude and swing as they change their place and position You can scarcely imagine how many totally different aspects a fishing barque for instance, may present in the course of a few moments, you have hardly time to jot down one before it is completely altered Seizing them flying as it were, is not merely a very interesting exercise but most useful practice, by this means you will collect a quantity of notes which will be invaluable in the future

In the same way, make a collection of architectural masses, and details of detached portions, such as capitals, pediments, or columns, which have a distinctive character, or of buildings as a whole, frowning dungeons or graceful turrets rustic homes or stately castles When you draw details of ornament —volutes, scrolls, or delicate tracery—do it with the same care as your studies of foreground, taking special pains to emphasise anything characteristic of the style and date Gothic or Renaissance, Louis XIII or Louis XV

In short sketch everything that attracts your interest, and be sure that some day, sooner or later you will find a use for the drawing

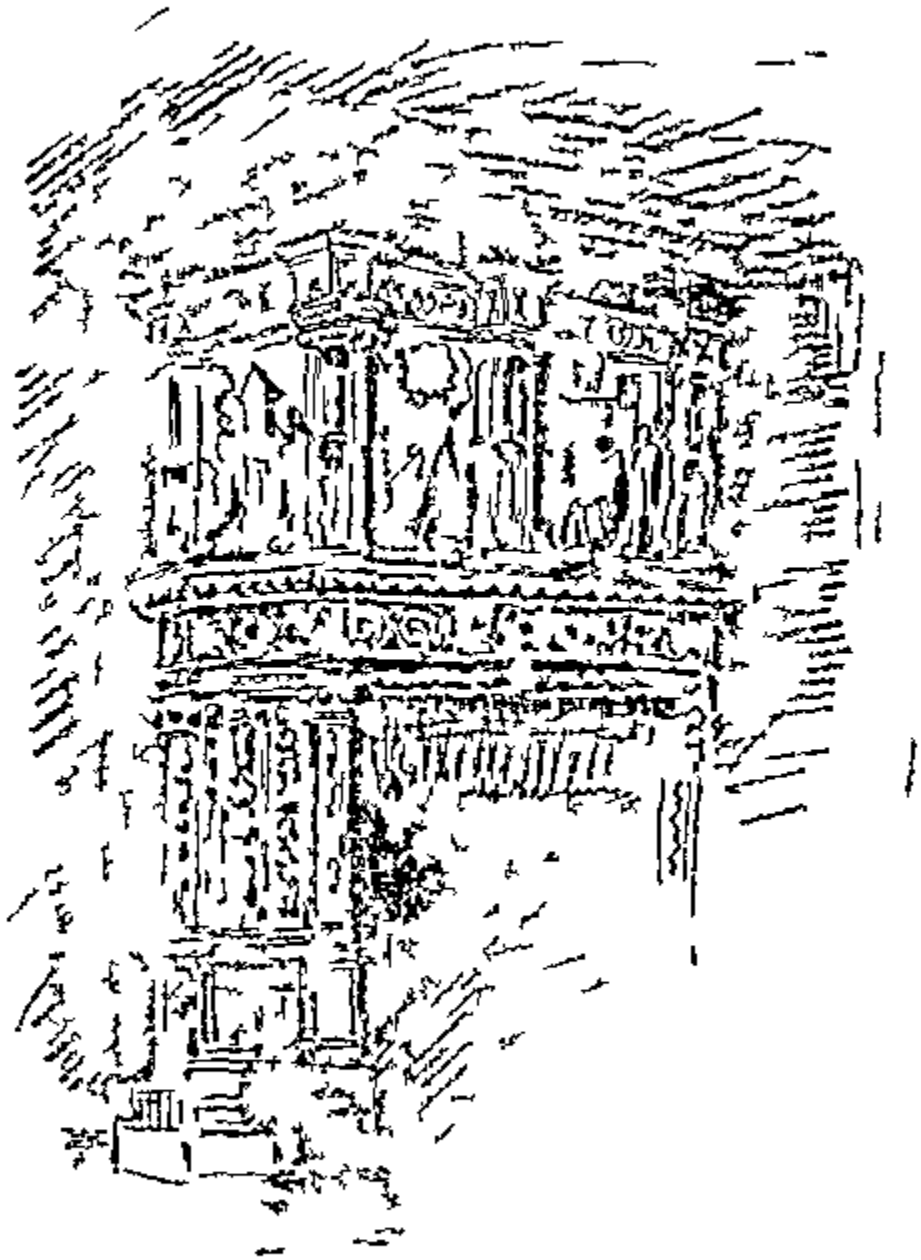
I mentioned an instance just now a mediæval scene, requiring studies of cabinets and seats, this was supposing the scene to be laid in an interior, but

if it had to be placed out of doors in the court yard of a castle, or under the walls of a dungeon—how glad you



would be to find in your sketch book a suggestion for the dungeon or castle of your fancy! If you have nothing of the kind—bless me! take the train if your

composition is worth it France can show you more castles and dungeons than you will ever want Go to



Tourraine for instance, you will not have long to seek for the thing you need If indeed you are engaged on work too trivial to justify such an expedition make the best of the authorities of which t

is no lack in any great library—in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris the British Museum or South Kensington Art Library in London—or of the numerous books compiled for reference but they can never be the same to you as the evidence of your own senses recorded on the spot however slight the record, and however elaborate the other authorities.

VI

Sketches of whole scenes done instantaneously such as studies of a crowd, and of stage scenes, actual incidents, etc.

This class of sketch is more difficult to take it demands the greatest skill—I might almost call it dexterity—and above all long practice. To make a drawing of this kind calls all the faculties into play at once you must see, observe remember and draw still you must keep cool and not allow yourself to be carried away by your exciting task. For in point of fact there is sometimes so much to remember to observe and to sketch all at the same time and incidents follow each other so rapidly that you will be in danger of getting into inextricable confusion if you do not keep your brain clear.

As I said in the first chapter these must be short hand notes, you can do no more, but on going home

after such a piece of work it lies in your power while you are still vividly impressed with what you have seen to fill in these notes and add the details which you were compelled to omit The impression and the effects being still fresh in your memory, you may thus compile a whole stock of suggestions and details from which to perfect a thoroughly complete and correct drawing of the scene

Supposing, for instance that you are sent out to sketch military manœuvres in the field You evidently cannot stop to draw details, you must grasp the characteristic aspect of the scene, and try to concentrate the interest of the spectator on the point you emphasise Now, in army manœuvres it is the *movement* which is the source of interest Without worrying yourself to make a pretty sketch which is out of the question devote yourself to what I have called a synthetical sketch, which is indispensable, by a few conventional lines or symbols note the position and relations of the troops, with their names —light horse, infantry, cavalry—and the places where officers are etc Then take a few notes of details, faces and costumes, if the troops are in motion and about to take up a position sketch the action of one or two men which when you work up your drawing will help you to complete them all

If you require typical details or an isolated group,

elaborate your study, and try to express exactly what you see, both as to character and as to action Note at the same time the effect you aim at producing; the uniforms and arms of one regiment will be glittering in the sunshine, while others will be in the shade One battalion will stand out against the white smoke of the guns, which will partly blot out another.

I have mentioned the army manœuvres as an instance of this kind of work, but there are other and more difficult examples. A procession, for instance: think of the rapidity you must achieve to enable you to take notes of the principal costumes, the cars, and so forth. This is really shorthand—a shorthand for which you yourself must invent the signs and remember the key. Begin with an outline of the form of the car (say), and the position of the figures placed upon it; then, with a few strokes and signs, record the more important costumes, and try to impress the others on your memory Next you must take note, hastily I need hardly say, of the crowd following the procession—men on horseback, foot-passengers, etc, still in the same way, by signs which you can understand, and so, on your return home, complete and fill in the sketch

The same process applies to theatrical scenes, still, there is one facilitating circumstance on the

appears try to draw him, both as to character and costume, as completely and accurately as possible Then, if he disappoints you by not re appearing you can do without him, having made your notes which though incomplete, will serve your purpose If he should return, so much the better, you can work up your sketch Follow this plan with every person in the piece, take note of the names that you may find them again at once for, as you do not usually know what the course of the drama is to be, you cannot beforehand select the scene which you will take for your subject when you make the finished drawing

Sometimes however, it happens that you may have instructions as to which scene you are to represent, so much the better for you Do not rest on your laurels, but until that scene is before you sketch in the scenery as you have time, and as soon as the actors and actresses engaged in it appear on the stage, note their appearance 'make up and dress If you can record their gestures with a few touches, but if you have not time to draw them make verbal notes, and try to impress them on your mind

But besides theatrical scenes, processions, and manœuvres, how many incidents of real life offer themselves to the pencil of the draughtsman! These sketches are, as I have said, the most difficult of all

to make and are not in fact to be attempted by any but expert practitioners the beginner who tries will if he succeeds at all only produce a very remote image of the thing he has seen Still it is capital practice—a sort of gymnastic exercise and extremely useful when you can produce a good sketch of life

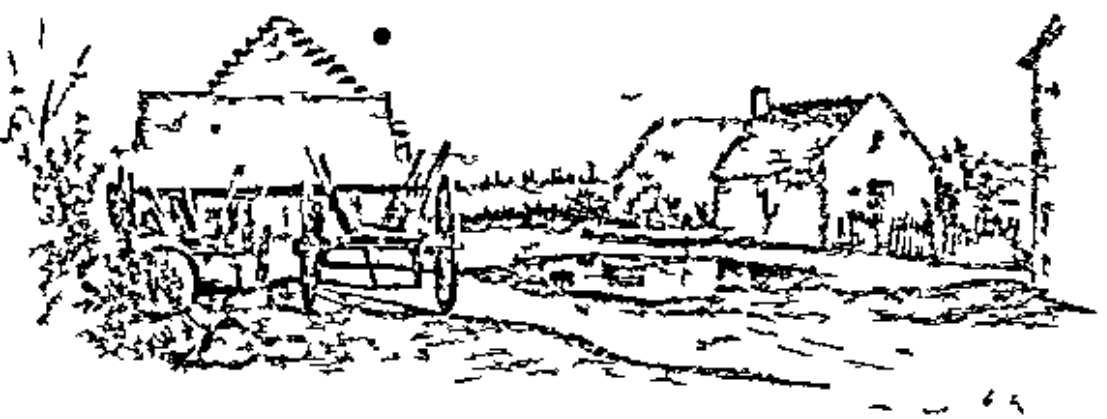
and motion you can do anything As to the setting and accessories you need not think of them till you have collected all the other information you need The action is but transient the background will remain so you will have time afterwards to draw it in—excepting only the theatrical scenery for the curtain falls and there an end!

Of course in theatrical matters the artist is often

enabled beforehand to see the scenery on the stage or study the scene painter's rough sketch; sometimes indeed he is allowed behind the scenes to make drawings of the dresses—a matter in which the wearers are generally most obliging. He is even admitted to the rehearsals, and has repeated opportunities of completing his work, which makes matters much easier, since when once he has seen the play he can make up his mind as to which passage he will represent, and only draw exactly what he needs. But this is not to be looked on as a general rule, and it is better practice to acquire the habit of sketching once for all, all the more so as it is not confined to drawing within the walls of a theatre. It can hardly be expected that a great catastrophe, or even the army manœuvres, should be repeated only to enable the artist to make his sketches with greater ease. In short, take advantage of every favourable circumstance, but accustom yourself to do without them. The greater contains the less—the artist who can conquer a difficulty can certainly do what is easy.

studies of subjects allowing of a lapse of time those, being essentially transient allowed of no more than elementary suggestions generally incomplete and leaving the most important part to memory

Sketches finished from Nature, and executed either for immediate reproduction or to be preserved like an engraving or a painting ought to be complete in every part No notes are admissible the effects



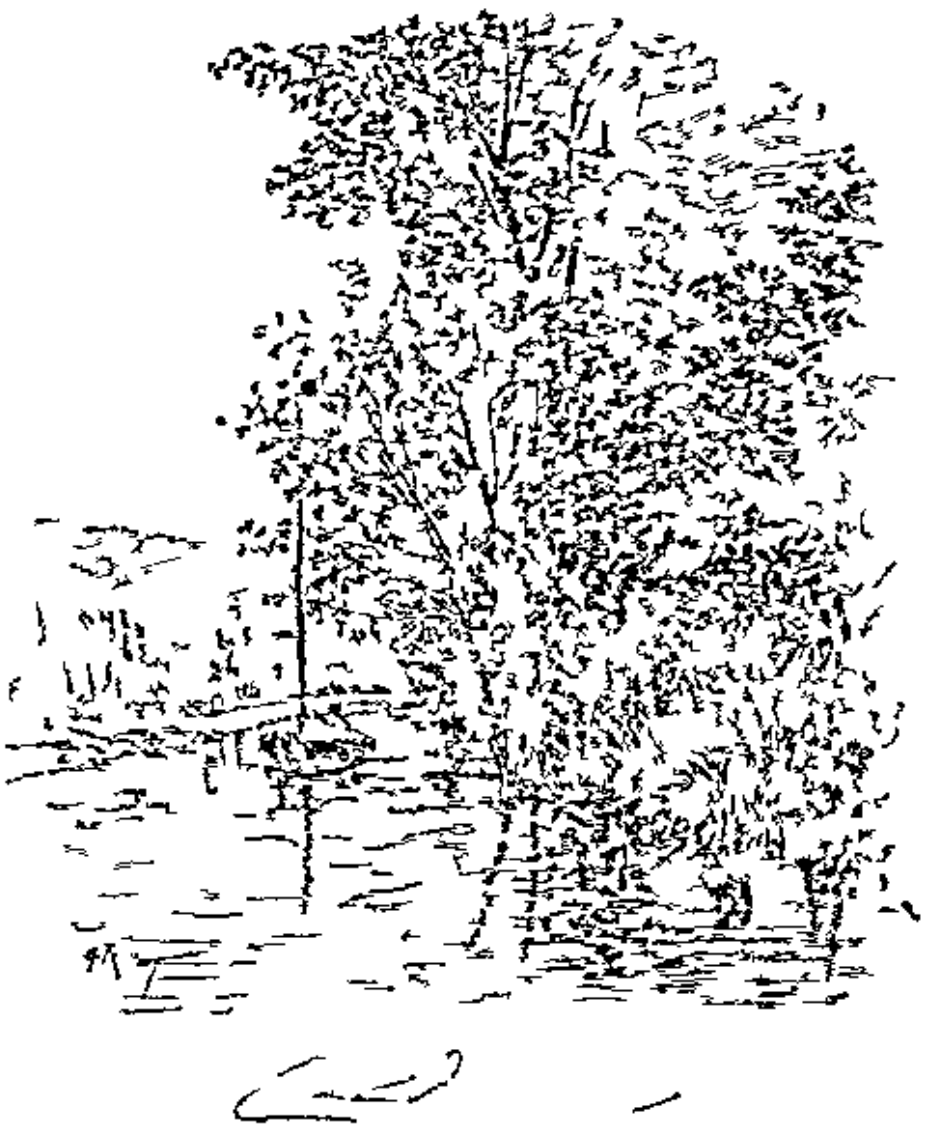
must be transcribed from Nature the details must be faithfully copied in fact such a work is more properly called a drawing than a sketch You must of course go boldly to work you must know exactly what you mean to do and be sure beforehand of the effect you aim at producing A drawing of this quality may be worked up on various occasions only remembering that you must return to it at about the same hour of the day and under the same light If your drawing is done for direct reproduction you

must adopt such a method as may be needed for the subsequent process pencil, pen, and washes combined if it is for an engraving on wood, pen and

ink on Bristol board—and note the ink must be very black and the paper very white—if it is for process printing, or else Wolff's crayons, on prepared paper, either grey or white

I assume that the reader is familiar enough with

the processes of reproduction to understand me and the methods of working up a drawing for each I cannot enlarge on the subject which would



take me far beyond the limits set me. Indeed it would require a special study of each process

It is better to finish your drawing from Nature if you can possibly do so and to touch it as little as may be at home Only allow yourself to add a little

elaboration which the somewhat makeshift character of all open air arrangements may have precluded on the spot but beware of being led into overcharging the details or too much *finish* at home Excess is always a fault

I have already advised you to put in a few touches of colour in sketches of foreground such as flowers and plants to make them as complete as possible I would advise you to do the same with large subjects when they admit of it It gives charm and style to your sketches if while putting in the colour you keep it light and transparent not, of course in drawings done for reproduction which must be worked by suitable method but in such as you intend to keep and for your own pleasure which does not hinder their usefulness

VIII

Outline sketches.—Sketches of pure invention

I must say a few words about another and distinct class of sketches I mean humorous outline sketches These are for the most part works of pure invention hit off as we should say by natural gift or knack—*de chic* as the French call it that is to say they are not based on any drawing or study They are for the most part entirely imaginary such at any rate as those which have for some time been the fashion of stories told in illustration without letter press the works, for instance of our friend Caran d'Ache which are brimful of wit and fun or the amusing drawings of Courboin These are purely imaginary no doubt but be under no mistake To do imaginative work of this quality you must have made myriads of sketches from Nature and have furnished your memory with every conceivable gesture and expression Besides this you must be keenly observant a little sardonic—in a kindly way of course—and apt to see the funny side of things even of those that are not funny Among the drawings of which I am now speaking some however which are killingly droll have been done from quite serious studies only turned inside out as it were to show

the humorous side, the comic aspect of a serious incident.

Only a quite special turn of mind and gift of "seeing things," will allow you to attempt this class of work which is, in fact, worthless if the artist himself is anything short of admirable. To be good at all, they not only require a great deal of spice, and occasionally something even more pungent; they must be well drawn and absolutely true in action and expression, otherwise they miss the mark, and nothing is so dreary as an attempt to be funny which misses fire.

For keen observation I advise you to look through the numerous outline drawings, with letterpress, by Leonce Petit, they may strike you as a little childish in feeling, and too simply executed, but they are full of rural poetry, and so true—so absolutely what he saw and knew. Leonce Petit must certainly have made sketches from Nature, and no end of them.

Then, in quite another style, look at the delightful compositions of Jules Chéret, in these fancy and high spirits are the ruling features. He, you may be sure, had drawn from Nature again and again. It is long preliminary study which enables him now to scatter bright fancies broadcast in those brilliant effects and witty designs with which you, no doubt, are familiar. They are full of movement,

expression and colour whether as sketches or as finished drawings

Some artists have a remarkable power of reproducing from fancy and memory anything they have seen graven in their memory like the gait the gesture the figure the features of individuals they have scarcely glanced at and they could sketch a striking likeness of an absent face

This is almost always a natural gift some people have it as others have the power of mental calculation At the same time I believe it to be possible to acquire it so far at any rate as to enable you to make a presentable first sketch and to attain the ability to draw an object without having it before you Still it needs an immense amount of practice, it is only after long training and by constant habit that you will succeed The best method I believe is as follows —Draw a landscape an object a person from Nature without looking again at this first sketch make another from memory and in the course of time you will succeed in drawing things you have seen when you can no longer see them Still this will not avail for what may be called serious drawing and will be of no use excepting for humorous sketches or for the fanciful decoration of an album or the margins of a story book

Although if you have had a little experience

CHAPTER V

HOW TO MAKE USE OF A SKETCH

IT is good to be able to make sketches it is far better to be able to make good use of them I refer of course to such sketches as are intended to be your stock in trade notes collected here there and everywhere such scraps as I spoke of in an earlier chapter where I warned you to let nothing escape you as long as you could carry a pencil and sketch book Everything is of use and the slightest suggestion—if only of a blade of grass a tool or a flat wall—will somewhere and some day find its use I can but repeat the more sketches you have by you the easier you will find it at need to complete a composition and your sketches will not infrequently supply you with a first idea If your imagination fails you when you have to make a drawing turn over your portfolios and often a quite trifling scrap—a few hasty lines a bit of landscape an architectural study the movement of a figure seized in the very act—will give you a subject to work up and often lead you to the composition you need You light upon a foreground study—a garland of flowers

you will at once detect this *knack* in a sketch not done from Nature you will feel the effect of Nature in one that is here you will always find, however rough the work may be, a stamp of truth which you will rarely find in the other Work from Nature, then, more and more you can only gain by it, whereas in drawing out of your head" you run great danger of losing much

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different ways you will not infrequently find that you have somewhere the general materials for such a composition A rustic scene for instance labourers

COMPOSITION OF THE FRAGMENTS ON PAGES 80 81

at their work a peasant woman on her way to church or to the town a morning or evening effect, if you have followed my advice, and have in your

note books a little of everything you will find a score of landscapes which will do for the background of the incident you wish to represent You must have drawn labouring men in an endless variety of attitudes As for churches you will have many more

ANOTHER ARRANGEMENT OF THE SAME ELEMENTS.

than you need, and since in the course of your wandering you must have sketched many peasant women you have all the elements of your design Now it only remains to turn them to account in a pleasing manner and find an effect that will give them due value

If the illustration is to be ornamental in style look through your drawings of plants and foregrounds

your various studies of architectural bits your sketches of trees and by combining this and that you will not fail to arrange such a composition as you require

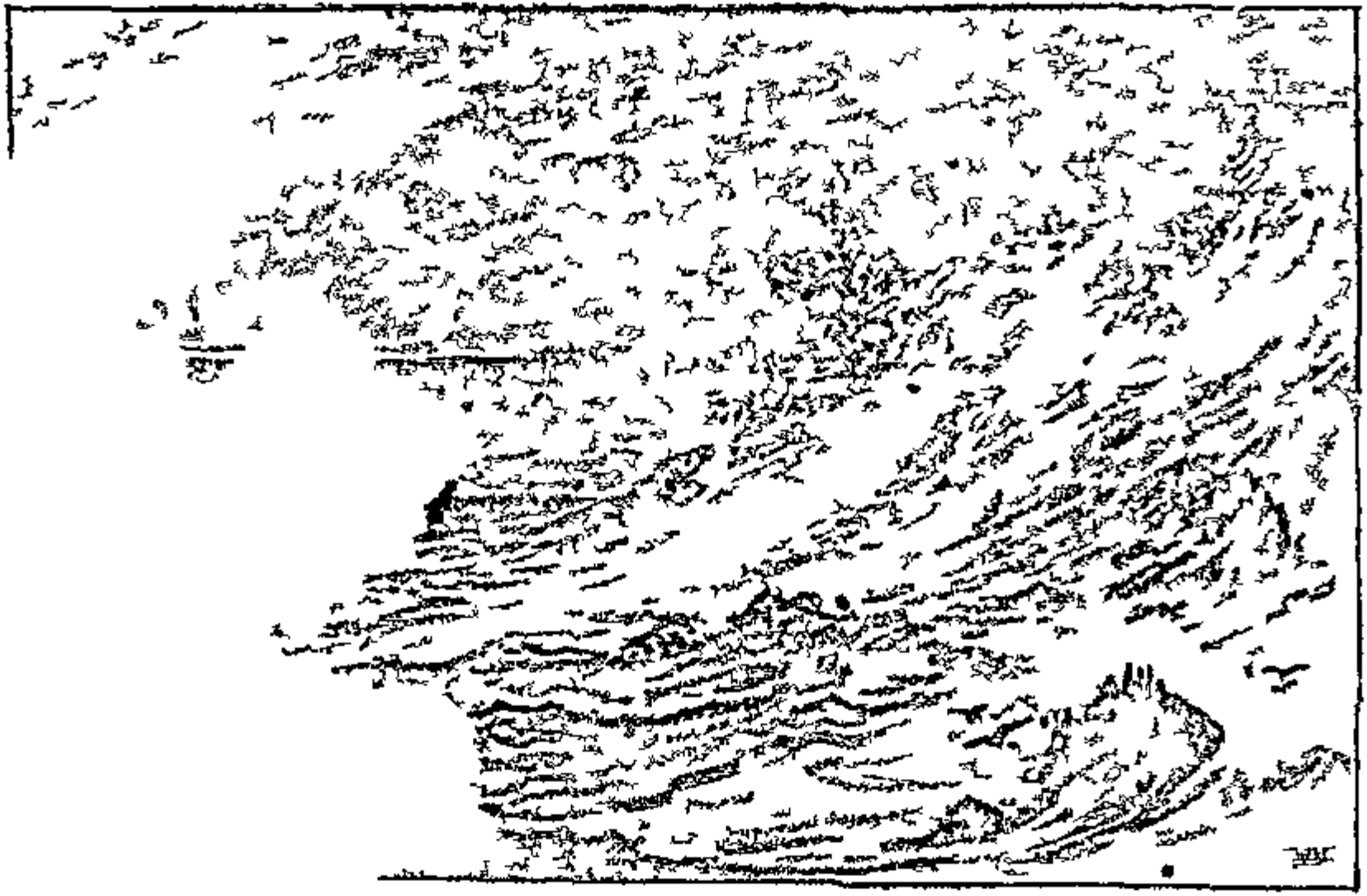
In making such a design the first thing to be considered is what you want most to emphasise—the scenery or the incident Sacrifice one to the other according to whether you think the figures you intend to place in the picture or the landscape in which they move the more amusing and interesting The same sketches will supply you with the materials of several compositions, you may utilise the same materials and produce quite different results. And whether the scene is laid in a town or in the country in the fields or the woods the method of work is the same

So again for drawings of effect A storm, let us say you must first hunt up a study of clouds—you are sure to have one among your sketches and even if it is of the slightest and made on the plan suggested in an earlier chapter, with numbers to indicate the shades of tone it will quite answer your purpose The storm has burst perhaps choose a landscape in which the wind tossed trees suggest the character of the scene you want to represent take a bit out of one sketch and a bit out of another if necessary to compose a whole

If the writer whose tale you are illustrating has been so ruthless as to allow his characters to be overtaken by the tempest he describes you will surely be able to find some studies of figures whose attitudes with a little modification may beseem hapless creatures dripping wet.

Is it a storm at sea? Look through your seaside studies the many boats of which you have drawn the hull and rigging the sketches of rocks and waves and you will find material for six tempests as soon as one

I am of course addressing those who have already accumulated a tolerably large collection of such documents It is not in a day nor in a month that such a variety of materials can be got together as will enable you to treat any subject—or almost any subject It is only by long patience and drawing—persistently drawing—that you will furnish yourself with such an equipment a very precious stock in trade—a perfect fortune indeed which you would not for worlds surrender for it cannot be amassed a second time, and many artists would rather give away a finished composition than sacrifice a single sketch And they are perfectly right for notes from Nature however rough are always beyond price to the man who made them Who can tell that he will ever revisit certain places where he found the picturesque



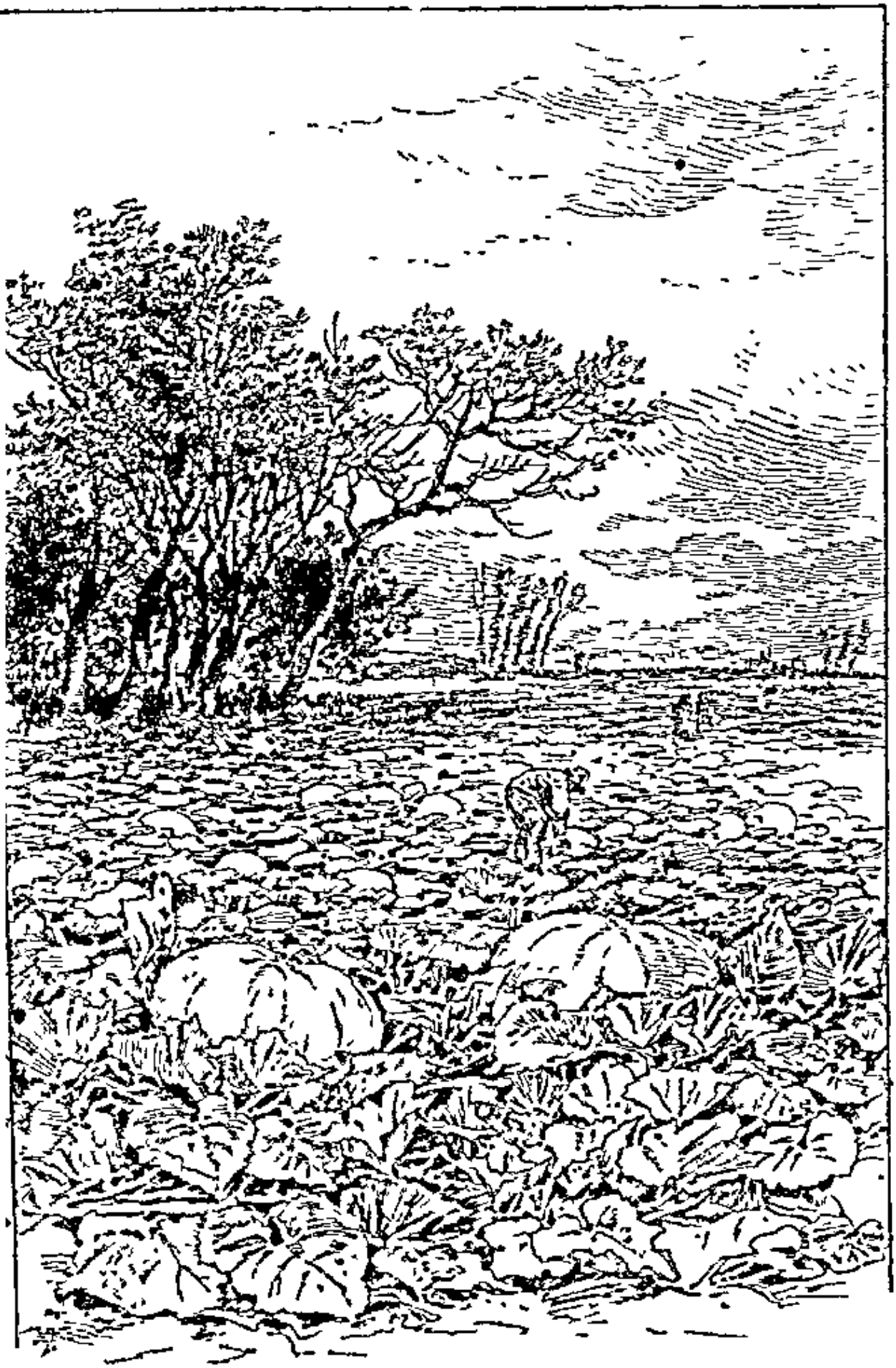
or characteristic spots he has recorded in his sketch book whether he will ever again see this or that typical gesture of which he took brief note?

A

It is a matter of great importance to know how to use your possessions without exhausting them A sketch may do duty again and again with a little dexterity You must assimilate your drawings and reproduce them, but not copy them Take some of

this and some of that, piece out a bit of one with a feature of another

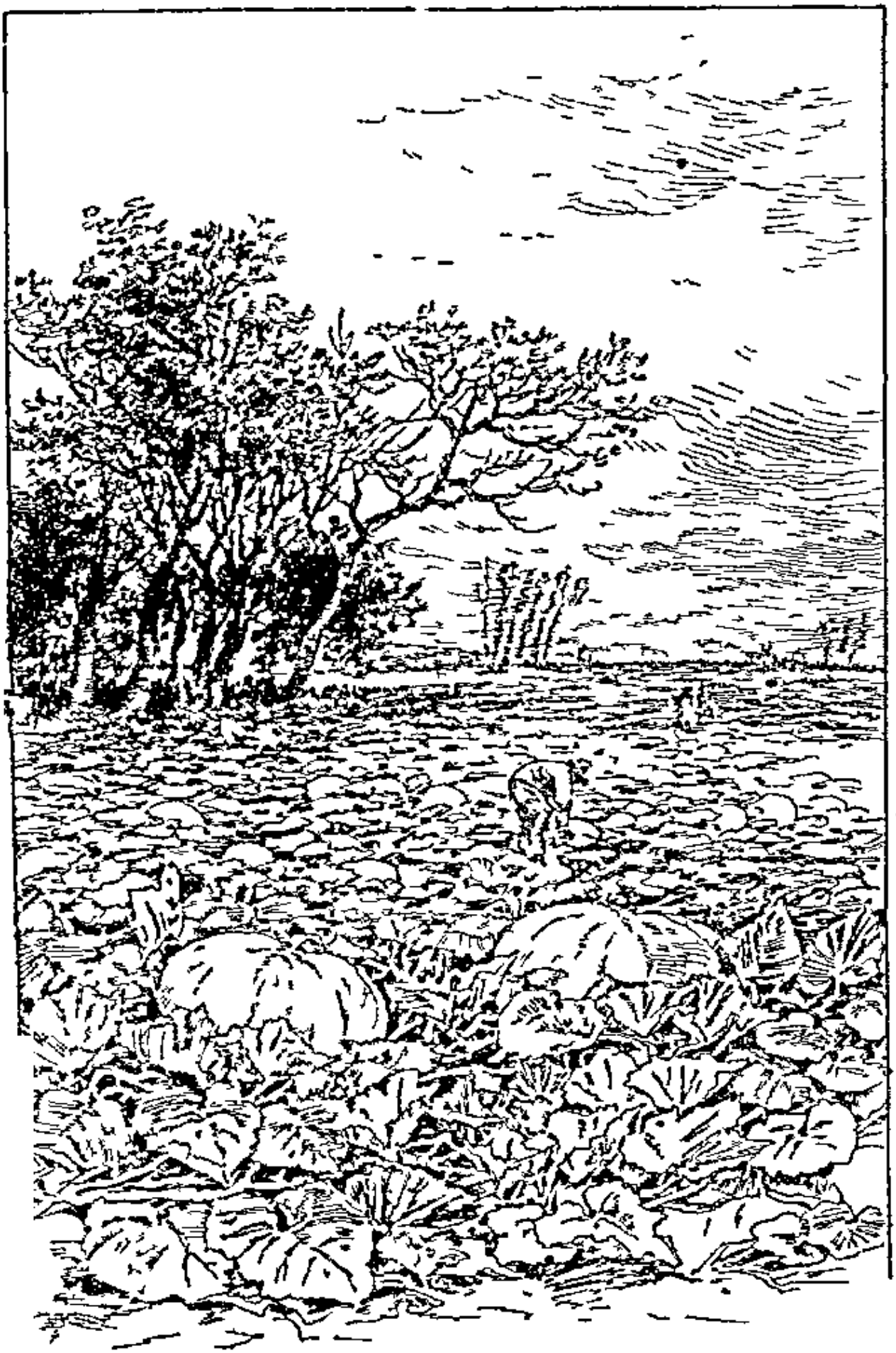
Take care to fix your drawings in pencil or charcoal, then you know that they will keep safe for an



COMPOSITION OF THE FRAGMENTS ON THE PRECEDING PAGES.

or less into different categories the flowers apart from the architecture landscapes in one portfolio figures in another and so on This may at first seem troublesome You can't do it but one sketch book in which you record everything you may care to employ your pencil on beasts and human beings the sea or the country and indeed, it is not until you have already collected a certain quantity of materials that you need try to arrange them in such order as to make them easily accessible for use It is quite easy to cut out everything of one kind and stick it into another book or keep the leaves detached in boxes or portfolios If you travel or make sketching expeditions arrange your sketch books geographically The point to aim at is ease of reference you must so classify your notes and drawings for your own convenience as to enable you to lay your hand at once on the thing you require and not to have to rummage through all your papers which would lead to serious loss of time

If your purpose in sketching is merely to amuse yourself, for the pleasure of it if your only object is to record your impressions of the places you have admired of incidents or effects which have struck or surprised you—excellent reasons for indulging your taste—the case is altered you have only to seek what is pleasing and not what will be useful you



COMPOSITION OF THE FRAGMENTS ON THE PRECEDING PAGES.

need only draw what you fancy and not what you can turn to future account In discoursing of the *utilisation* of sketches I address those who desire to be draughtsmen not to amuse themselves but to make a living to artists not to amateurs whose drawings may be delightful while their destiny is only to grace an album to lie in a portfolio and to be turned over for the artist's pleasure or that of his friends

CHAPTER VI

A FEW USEFUL HINTS.

If you find yourself in the agonies of composition without the necessary materials for the design, if you have been too idle or too improvident to store a sufficient stock of sketches to supply you with the needful elements of your work: if, in short, you are poor in notes and sketches, there is but one thing you can do: Put on your hat and seek from Nature the inspiration which fails you, or the subjects you lack.

What a trifle will sometimes give rise to a whole composition—a complete picture! Just as on looking through your portfolios, the roughest sketch may suggest a subject when you have in vain ransacked your brain, so, in Nature, the most trivial incident may prove the starting-point of a complete design; things which have not the remotest apparent connection with the subject you want to work up, lead you, in the most unexpected manner, to the idea you were feeling after. How many pictures have had their origin in some scene for which the artist was wholly unprepared?

If after you have settled yourself to sketch your paper before you charcoal in hand if after turning the spotless sheet in every possible position you still feel uninspired if after making ten twenty attempts to set out your composition you are weary and discouraged but still perseveringly bent on dragging out of your brain an idea which does not lurk there take my advice give it up go out of the house into the fresh air It will refresh you to begin with and may perhaps evolve the idea you have been seeking in vain Whereas sitting alone left to itself without studies from the life the brain has no fertility and if under these conditions of recalcitrant imagination you commit yourself to an ill composed design there is always the fear that you may work round *and round in the same circle and never get out of it* with credit the first attempt will be followed by a second not any better probably worse and the longer you work the less you will do

What artist has not known such days of discouragement—days when he found himself wholly incapable of doing any good work when every line he drew was absurd and ridiculous when he seriously began to wonder whether he were not wholly inept?

On such days as these do not try to force yourself to invent and imagine it is waste of time you will only spoil your paper for nothing and be no for

warder at the end of the day You will, indeed, be tired, worn out, knocked up—far more than if you had done ten hours of successful work without respite. On such days as these, I say again go out. You need a change of ideas, and you will find it out of doors, whether in town or in the country, the dejection from which you are suffering at home will vanish as if by magic, and you will be amazed when you come in to find yourself revived, bright and capable, and ready to set to work with fresh spirit

Now, may I venture to offer a little sanitary advice? In the first place, always be warmly clad and stoutly shod A chill soon grips you when you are sitting still, even under a mild temperature, and it is very unpleasant to bring home with your sketch book a catarrh or a cough Beware of sun stroke, and above all of damp, if, for the love of art you sit down on the wet grass, look out for rheumatism and face ache Remain sitting as short a time as possible, if your sketch is an elaborate one, get up now and then, and walk about to stir your blood If your post is by the side of a pool, do not stay there after the sun gets low, the mists that rise from it are extremely dangerous But, for that matter, the mosquitoes will sound the hour of retreat, as soon as you hear their hum, be warned, and pack up at once Do not, however, imagine that it is sheer benevolence

on their part, flee from them and their allies as from the sun and damp and always carry a phial of ammonia about you it is a wise precaution, and can do no harm

CONCLUSION

I HAVE tried to be as explicit as possible, and to give the clearest instructions as to how to make and use a sketch, I shall be happy, indeed, if they prove helpful to anyone who, having never tried, did not know how to set to work, above all, if I have suggested to anyone the ambition to try to represent by pencil pen, or brush the objects and scenes that he has before him Drawing is not merely an agreeable accomplishment or an amusement—it is so useful

You who do draw, however little, have you not constantly in every day life had occasion to appreciate its practical utility? How often a few pencil strokes have settled a long discussion! You have seen something—a house, a piece of furniture—and you want to explain its peculiarities or its beauties to describe it, in fact You may talk as you will, and however clear the account you may give of it, however full the details, you can never make your hearer perfectly apprehend the form and character of the object in question But if you can only draw, you will soon make yourself understood, two minutes of *sketching is worth two days of explanation*

Imagine—though it is impossible—that you are talking to someone who does not in the least know what is meant by a circle and can form no conception of its shape I defy you to give him an idea of it by mere description If you are very clever, you may possibly have suggested it remotely, but the exact nature of it will not be clear to him Out with your pencil and you need waste no words And what is true of a circle is equally true of everything else

You are reading a book whatever the genius of the writer however great his talent for description if he has the literary palette of Théophile Gautier or Pierre Loti, he will to be sure, give you a very good idea of the places he takes you to but he does not produce the illusion of a thing seen Fill up the text with the very slightest sketch, and you will have a complete impression of the place described The reason is that a description, however exact and full leaves a great deal to the reader's imagination and a place will be conceived of by one in a way totally unlike the image formed by another, add a drawing to the description and you have the representation of what the author meant you to see It is the same with the description in words of a person How often will people try to give you a verbal portrait of some unknown individual, if you afterwards meet him

face to face, it is a hundred to one that you will exclaim "Well, I had pictured him as quite different!"

I have tried to point out the undeniable utility of drawing But besides its usefulness, there is the pleasant side of sketching, I defy you to tell me of a more delightful pastime. Some folks who have a horror of a country life, pronouncing it monotonous, and not knowing how to kill time, would change their opinions if they could but draw And they have only to try Their first attempts will be chaotic, they will include ten times, twenty times, too much, they will be full of faults of drawing or perspective By degrees the beginner will improve, and learn to simplify, omit, and select, and if he only works at it in earnest, and above all perseveres, he will be amazed to see what progress he makes In sketching, as in everything else, "By dint of hammering you become a blacksmith"

THE END

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